



Scott in title role of "Patton" (1970).

He's fierce, funny and brilliant

The Loves And Hates Of George C. Scott

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HE DISTINGUISHED actress Maureen Stapleton once complained to her director, Mike Nichols, that her co-star, George C. Scott, made her nervous. "Frankly," she confessed, "I'm afraid of him."

"Don't worry," Nichols said. "The whole world's afraid of George Scott."

One thing is certain: Few stars have made more effort to guard their privacy. At one time, at his home in Connecticut, Scott became so dissatisfied with the number of calls getting through his unlisted number that he disconnected his phone altogether. In Hollywood, a film producer once offered a \$1000 reward to anyone who could produce evidence of having seen, let alone spoken to, Scott at any fashionable occasion or event. The reward was never collected.

Nor is there any indication that Scott has mellowed with age. During the grueling 76-day filming in Yugoslavia of *Mussolini*, a seven-hour TV miniseries to air later this fall—and also during the shooting in London of *The Last Days of Patton*, to be aired early next year—interviewers, both foreign and domestic, found Scott either "unavailable" or so difficult as to make more than one wish that he had been.

I was thinking such discouraging thoughts as I drove to Connecticut to see Scott. I have known George and his wife, the fine actress Trish Van Devere,



The actor/director at his home in Greenwich, Conn.

for many years, but fondness and admiration for Scott do not necessarily lessen apprehension. Indeed, the more I thought about it, the more I felt that the better part of valor might be to telephone to confirm my appointment.

"Who the hell is it?" came the unmistakable gravel rasp—the same one that, issuing from Scott's General Patton, had stopped the German panzers at the Battle of the Bulge. "Oh dammit it to hell," he said. "I'd forgotten all about you."

Warmed by this welcome, I made my way to Scott's residence, a handsome, old-fashioned mansion in the extremely un-actorish community of Greenwich. CLOSE GATE AFTER ENTERING AND LEAVING, read the sign on the huge wrought-iron gate. Attempting to do so, I managed, in shunting the bolt with my right hand, to give my left a thorough mashing. One-handed, I drove to the front of the house, where Scott himself stood on the wide stone steps together with one of the largest mastiffs I have ever seen. Master and mastiff surveyed me. Both were growling.

Getting out of the car, I had only a moment to reflect on why it is that people either choose dogs that look like them to begin with or else grow to look like their dogs—or is it the dogs that grow to look like them? For the fact was that a mountain of a mastiff—one bearing a distinct resemblance to Mr. Scott—was now bounding toward me.

"Nice doggie," I said, extending my last good hand.

"Don't give him that 'nice dog

BY CLEVELAND AMOR

COVER PHOTOGRAPH OF GEORGE C. SCOTT, TRISH VAN DEVERE AND CLINEVERE BY EDDIE ADAMS

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